

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

MAY 93

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on May Show artists.

FULL NAME: DOUGLAS UTTER

PRESENT POSITION

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 12/8/50 CLEVELAND

CATEGORY/PRIMARY MEDIA: PAINTING

ART TRAINING (Schools, Scholarships, etc.):

EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN (include location and year):

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED MATERIALS

COLLECTIONS THAT NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

AWARDS:

We would appreciate having a statement about your philosophy and work as an artist—either general or something specific about the piece(s) selected for this year's May Show to aid us in the preparation of gallery talks and in the release of publicity materials. For more space, use the back of this sheet.



# Erotic paintings masterful

• Sexually explicit works at Cleveland's Busta Gallery are sensitive, expressive

BY DOROTHY SHINN  
*Beacon Journal art critic*

There's a sign on the door to Cleveland's William Busta Gallery that reads: "Caution, art can be more powerful than you might imagine. Proceed with caution."

Already the potential visitor knows that what's inside the gallery at 2021 Murray Hill Road is not going to be your everyday bed of roses.

The works in the front gallery are not that confrontational, unless the viewer sees all contemporary art as threatening. It's in the back gallery where the potentially explosive works are being housed this month, for that's where the exhibit *Douglas Utter, Erotic Economy: Contours of Desire* is being shown through next Sunday.

Busta gives all viewers adequate warning. There's a small wall a few feet in front of the door to keep visitors from "accidentally" seeing something that a temporary sign on the wall warns they might not want to see. The sign reads: "Notice: The subject matter of these paintings is sexually explicit. Unaccompanied children are not permitted."

OK. So we're all warned, and we step inside anyway. What do we see? I'll tell you what I saw first: Sensitive, expressive paintings and monoprints, gorgeous brushwork, total mastery of technique and form and a certain affinity for various artists of the London School — Frank Auerbach, Lucian Freud and Francis Bacon come to mind.

Having seen that, I did then notice that what I was looking at was an explicit sex scene between a man and a woman.

In fact there are exactly seven sexually explicit paintings in this exhibit, four semi-explicit monoprints, two merely suggestive paintings and one (*Madonna and Child*) that is definitely not explicit in any sexual way whatsoever, unless you consider that the making of children by its nature involves sexual explicitness.

## Secondary consideration

So, unless the viewer is going to this show just to satisfy some salacious urge, the sexual nature of most of these works becomes an almost secondary consideration. No kidding. These are really beautiful paintings.

That truly is the main criteria that should be used for viewing this show. It is, in fact, the only criteria. Of course, I realize that having seen as much art as I have over the years, and being more interested in signs of intelligent life in art than signs of raging hormones, I might not be as vulnerable as others to the images Utter has placed before the public.

So be forewarned again: If these kinds of images upset you, do yourself and the rest of us a favor. Don't go see this show.

Utter comes out of the abstract-expressionist tradition, and, like former Cleveland R.B. Kitaj (also a member of the London School), he loves to draw the figure. His work has involved a coupling of these two desires: gestural drawing and painting of the figure.

"I look at my work as figurative, with gestural drawing growing out of the depiction of the figure," Utter said. "The subject matter is certainly one thing that necessitates my being much more subjective."

## Non-art materials

His abstract-expressionist roots also are apparent in the materials he uses: roofing tar, spray paint, house paint — all definitely non-art materials that anyone could buy at a hardware store.

The paintings derive, then, in part from the materials he uses, and in part from the monoprints. Utter uses the monoprints almost like a journal, reflecting his personal concerns, the working out of problems; they're sounding boards for his art and his life.

The compositions are abstract in orientation, with pitchy blacks and filmy sepias often punctuated by areas of stark white and, less often, bright apple red. If it weren't for the bravura brushwork, one might be forced also to think of the Constructivist School in more ways than one, actually, for there's a strong linear sense of structure that plays off the brushwork, balancing the areas of intense emotion with those of cool logic and taut design.

Sunday, May 23, 1993

## AKRON BEACON JOURNAL



*Everything Stops* by painter Douglas Utter.

The figures themselves have a sense of emotional speed, as though they are moving quickly out of range. It is a subtle and gratifying effect, for it reminds us of the fleeting nature of life's joys as well as the persistence of memory. It is an effect he achieves with spray paint, going back over some areas with gestural washes so that the images become subsumed by the painting itself.

One of the reasons Utter made the paintings, he said, was to see if there was a way he could paint this most important and sensitive subject without letting it overwhelm everything else that goes on in his work. It seems to me that he has succeeded.

The overwhelming impression one carries away from this show is that of masterful painting. When that happens, when the sheer beauty of a painter's art can dominate what could have been in less competent hands mere sensation, then a milestone has been set. Those who want to know the difference between the two could use this show as a standard.



## STATEMENT

I try always to do work that rises from some necessity, some urgent need of my own, which can also emerge in a natural way from the materials I use. To that end my paintings refer constantly to flesh, seeking to establish an equivalence of touch, interrupted again and again by the facts of paint and the acts of painting. Desire and the mystery of touch, the alternating of presence and absence weaving through the net of our senses -- these have been my subjects, and remain so in the current group of works.

Whatever the specific situations and problems that I grapple with in my paintings, I continue to try to capture and define intimate distances, and to rediscover in the materials I use the tensions and pressures of flesh: how it is bound to the world, ending and continuing.

Douglas Utter, 1993



## VITA

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1993 William Busta Gallery (Cleveland, OH) Erotic Economy: Contours of Desire Paintings 1992-93 May-June  
Brooklyn 11205 Art (Brooklyn, NY) Lost Dimensions: The Museum of Myself April-May
- 1991 Galerie Kneipe (Augsburg, Germany) Douglas Utter: Arbeiten  
Gallery Saireido (482 West Broadway, NY) Various Exposures: Paintings by Douglas Utter  
Venustatis (Schwinsberg/Stabler Gallery, 104 West 14th St., NY) Douglas Utter
- 1990 International House Gallery, Columbia University (500 Riverside Dr., NY) Spectrums of Intimacy  
College of Wooster (Wooster, OH) Paintings of Douglas Utter  
William Busta Gallery (2021 Murray Hill Rd., Cleve., OH) Paintings 1989-90  
The European Art Connection (Chagrin Falls, OH) Recent Paintings
- 1989 William Busta Gallery Paintings
- 1988 Joyce Porcelli Gallery (Cleveland, OH) Paintings and Photocopy Derivations
- 1987 Dobama Theater Gallery (Cleveland, OH) Works of Douglas Utter

### SELECTED TWO AND THREE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 1992 Cuyahoga Community College (Cleveland, OH) Finding Time: Recent Work by Paul Miklowski and Douglas Utter
- 1989 Sandusky Cultural Center (Sandusky, OH) Young and Restless
- 1988 SPACES (Cleveland, OH) Anna Arnold, Brian Azzarello, Douglas Utter

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1993 Cleveland Museum of Art, May Show  
Asian American Arts Center (New York, NY) China, June 4, 1989  
Northeast Ohio Art Dealers Association Fine Arts Exposition  
Tower City, Cleveland, April 17-18, 1993
- 1992 Hallinan Center (Cleveland, OH) 37th Annual Newman Religious Art Show
- 1991 Hallinan Center 36th Annual Newman Religious Art Show  
Wesley Theological Seminary, Center for the Arts and Religion (Washington, DC) Wrestling With the Angel  
Atrium Gallery, National City Bank (Cleveland, OH) History of the Self
- 1990 Southern Ohio Museum and Cultural Center (Portsmouth, OH) Mother and Child  
Cuyahoga Community College (Cleveland, OH) Artists; As They See Themselves



(SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS, CONT.)

- The Governor's Residence Art Collection 1990-91  
(Columbus, OH) Ohio Arts Council  
Hallinan Center (Cleveland, OH) 35th Annual Newman  
Religious Art Show  
Cleveland Museum of Art, May Show
- 1989 Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, A to Zizi  
Cleveland Museum of Art, May Show  
Valley Art Association, Contemporary Vignettes (Chagrin  
Falls, OH)
- 1988 Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, Off The Wall  
Park Synagogue (Cleveland, OH) Art at Park Festival XII  
Cleveland Museum of Art, May Show  
Joyce Porcelli Gallery (Cleveland, OH) Ten by Ten
- 1987 Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, Off The Wall  
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Psychotronic and  
Neopunkedelic Art Exhibition  
Butler Institute of American Art (Youngstown, OH)  
Fifty-first National Midyear Exhibition  
Cleveland Museum of Art, May Show
- 1986 Artspace Gallery (Sacramento, CA) Third International  
Artspace Exhibition  
Canton Institute of Art (Canton, OH) All Ohio Show  
Cleveland Museum of Art, May Show

AWARDS

- 1993 Ohio Arts Council, Individual Artists Fellowship in the  
Visual Arts
- 1990 First Prize - Purchase Award, 35th Annual Newman  
Religious Art Show
- 1987 \$1000 Painting Award, May Show, Cleveland Museum of Art

PUBLISHED CRITICAL WRITINGS BY THE ARTIST

- "Ellen Brooks at CCCA" New Art Examiner, June 1993
- "Bob Blackburn's Collection" New Art Examiner, March 1993
- "Constance Pierce" New Art Examiner, March 1993
- "China: June 4, 1989" New Art Examiner, Dec 1992
- "Drawing the Big Picture: A Gallery for the People at CIA"  
The River Burns, Solstice issue, 1992
- "Tomas Ruller" (Time Arts review) New Art Examiner, Nov '92
- "Massacre at Tiananmen Square" Link, Cleveland Institute of  
Art Magazine, Fall 1992
- "Jane Berger" New Art Examiner, Oct 1992
- "Martyrs and Other Slaves / Cynthia Baillie and Timothy Nero"  
Dialogue, Sept-Oct 1992
- "Cruciformed: Images of the Cross Since 1980" Dialogue,  
10-11/91
- "Christopher Pekoc: New Works" Dialogue, 8-9/91
- "Bruce Checefsky: The Nerve of the Present" (catalogue essay,  
Centrum Sztuki Wspolczesnej, Warsaw, Poland, 1991)
- "Feed and Seed / Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler at Spaces"  
Dialogue, 3-4/91
- "The Raw and the Cooked: Ohio Juried Exhibitions Come of Age"  
(cover feature) Dialogue, 11-12/90



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## (WRITINGS, CONT)

- "Ohio Selections 1990 / CCCA" Dialogue, 11-12/90  
 "Slide Rule" (editorial) Dialogue, 9-10/90  
 "Photography Until Now/CMA" Dialogue, 9-10/90  
 "Robert Smithson's Partially Buried Woodshed" Dialogue,  
 7-8/90  
 "John L. Moore/CCCA" Dialogue, 5-6/90  
 "Network News (Cleveland's New Organization for the Visual  
 Arts)" Northern Ohio Live, April, 1990  
 "Not With a Whimper But a Bang (CSU's Don Desmett and  
 IRWIN)" Northern Ohio Live, April, 1990  
 "Idol Thoughts, Altar Egos, Votive Offerings and Ritual  
 Objects/The Sandusky Cultural Center" Dialogue, 3-4/90  
 "Athena Tacha: New Works 1986-9/CCCA" Dialogue, 11-12/89  
 "Anxious and Assured/SPACES" Dialogue, 9-10/89  
 "Becoming One With the Past: The Refigured Image at TMA"  
Dialogue, 5-6/89  
 "Work From the Tomb: An Installation by Gary Spinosa"  
Dialogue, 3-4/89

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 at Galerie Kneipe, Augsburg, Germany) 8.Mai '91, pg. 20  
Augsburg Scene (USMC Augsburg), "American Artist Exhibits  
 Here" 4/30/91, pg. 14  
Catalogue, American Cancer Society Designer Hope House, 1992, pg.17  
Catalogue, The Governor's Residence Art Collection 1990-91,  
 The Ohio Arts Council, pp. 60-61  
Catalogue, Fifty-first National Midyear Exhibition, Butler  
Institute of American Art, p. 29 (1987)  
Catalogue, NOADA 1993 Illustrated Exhibition Catalogue and  
Membership Directory, pg.12  
Catalogue, Mother and Child / Variations on a Universal Theme, 1990  
 Southern Ohio Museum 12/90  
Catalogue, Psychotronic and Neopunkedelic Art Exhibition,  
 Edinboro University of PA, 9/87, pg.3, pg.19  
Catalogue, Young and Restless, Sandusky Cultural Center,  
 March, 1989  
Chagrin Valley Times, "Utter Shows at Art Connection" 4/5/90  
 pg.B7  
 Christian, Barbara, Solon Herald Sun, "Contemporary Show at  
 VAC" 4/6/89 pg.C4  
The Cleveland Edition, "The Week" 9/6/90 pg.22  
The Cleveland Review, "Ambivalence" (cover illustration), "Ecce Homo"  
 (back page illustration) Winter 1993  
 Cullinan, Helen, The Plain Dealer:  
 "A May Show with oomph" 4/26/87 pg.11  
 "A Mean Streak at the May Show" 5/13/86 pg.4D  
 "Arts Talk" 9/23/90 pg.2H  
 "Festive Beat" 12/7/86 pg.6H  
 "F.Y.I." (photo of Utter's "Clinamen") FRIDAY 4/27/90  
 pg.15  
 "Huge Art Big at May Show" 6/27/89  
 "May Show Varied, Dynamic" 4/21/87 pg.13A  
 "More than a name change" FRIDAY 12/29/89 pg.12



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(BIBLIOGRAPHY, CONT.)

- "Paintings of Poignant Impact"(Review of solo show at William Busta Gallery) 6/9/89 FRIDAY pg. 10  
"Seeing every face as a work of art" FRIDAY 9/28/90 pg.3  
"Solid professionalism dominates the yearly event"  
5/29/88 pg.7H  
"The May Show" FRIDAY 5/6/90 pg.17  
"Today" 9/26/87 pg.2C  
"Today" 9/25/90 pg.5C  
"Varied Works Displayed at Newman Show" FRIDAY 2/23/90  
"Works to disturb, challenge" (SPACES exhibit) 2/12/88  
Desmett, Don, Dialogue, "Art with an edge: the William Busta Gallery" May/June, 1990 pg.21  
Freligh, Rebecca, The Plain Dealer, "Arts council distributes grants" 10/31/92 pg.2E  
Hershey, Rice, Northern Ohio Live, "Artists at Work" 1/91 pg.33  
Hinson, Tom, The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, April 1987, pg.149 and back cover  
Lawson, Ellen Nickensie, The Sun Press, "Abstracts out, images in among May Show works" 4/30/87 pg.B1  
Litt, Steven, The Plain Dealer, "Erotica exhibition could use shadings of subtlety" 5/17/93 pg.4C  
McCoy, Mary, The Washington Post, "Angel at Dadian Gallery" 9/28/91 pg.D2  
Raygun, Issue #3: "Syzygy (Anima)"(Utter's painting reproduced on the centerfold)  
"Ecce Homo" (detail on questionnaire)  
Issue #4, March 1993: "J." (full-page portrait of the German rap artist) "Anger" (Utter's painting inset in J. interview text) "Adam and Eve" (back page)  
Issue #5: "O, What Shall I Hang on the Chamber Walls" (full-page reproduction, Raygun subscription page)  
The River Burns:  
"Big Brotherhood" (cover art) Nov 1992  
"Guilty as Sin" (artwork) Nov 1992, pp.34-35  
"Magnification #2" (photo of Utter's painting and preview of "Finding Time" exhibit) Oct 1992, pg.57  
Sandusky Register, "New Ideas at Center" 3/9/89 pg.B4  
Santer, Rikki, Dialogue, "Douglas Utter: Paintings and Photocopy Derivations" (Review of solo show at Joyce Porcelli Gallery) March/April 1989  
Shinn, Dorothy, The Akron Beacon Journal "Erotic paintings masterful" (Review of solo show at William Busta) 5/23/93 pp.E1, E4  
Sparks, Amy, Cleveland Edition, "We need a May Show that matters" 6/23/88 pg.15  
Northern Ohio Live, "An Intensity of Painters" (Review of SPACES exhibit) January 1988



RESUME  
Douglas Utter  
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Douglas Utter, born 1950, is a painter now living in Cleveland, Ohio. His articles about current issues in the arts appear regularly in Dialogue and Northern Ohio Live. He has exhibited widely in the midwest and his work has been honored with a number of prizes, including the \$1000 Painting Award at the Cleveland Museum of Art's May Show in 1987. Utter's expressive imagery, derived from sources as diverse as classical literature, Renaissance religious iconography, and news photos, has as its general domain spectrums of intimacy and fluctuations of the self immersed in history. He says, "I suppose I am trying to describe and assimilate the immaterial shapes of my relations with family and friends, the contours of sorrow and desire and growth."

Solo Exhibitions

- (1991) Galerie Kneipe (Augsberg, West Germany) Douglas Utter May
- 1990 International House Gallery (New York, NY) Spectrums of Intimacy Dec.  
College of Wooster (Wooster, OH) Paintings Nov.-Dec.  
William Busta Gallery (Cleveland, OH) Paintings 1989-90 Sept.-Oct.  
The European Art Connection (Chagrin Falls, OH) Recent Paintings April
- 1989 William Busta Gallery Paintings June-July
- 1988 Joyce Porcelli Gallery (Cleveland, OH) Paintings and Photocopy Derivations Sept.-Oct.
- 1987 Dobama Theater Gallery (Cleveland, OH) Works of Douglas Utter Dec.

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 1990 Mother and Child Southern Ohio Museum and Cultural Center, Portsmouth, OH, Dec.  
Artists: As They See Themselves Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, OH, Sept.-Nov.  
The Governor's Residence Art Collection 1990-91 Columbus, OH  
May Show Cleveland Museum of Art  
Newman Religious Art Show Hallinan Center, Cleveland, OH
- 1989 A to Zizi Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art Dec.  
May Show Cleveland Museum of Art  
Contemporary Vignettes Valley Art Association, Chagrin Falls, OH April  
Young and Restless Sandusky Cultural Center, Sandusky, OH March-April
- 1988 Off the Wall Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art Oct.  
Art at Park Festival XII Park Synagogue, Cleveland, OH  
May Show Cleveland Museum of Art  
Ten by Ten Joyce Porcelli Gallery, Cleveland, OH Feb.  
Arnold, Azzarello, Utter SPACES Cleveland, OH Jan.
- 1987 Off the Wall Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art Dec.  
Psychotronic and Neopunkedelic Art Exhibition Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Bruce Gallery  
Fifty-first National Midyear Exhibition Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH  
May Show Cleveland Museum of Art
- 1987 Third International Artspace Exhibition Sacramento, CA  
All Ohio Show Canton Institute of Art, Canton, OH  
May Show Cleveland Museum of Art



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### Awards

- 1990 First Prize-Purchase Award Newman Religious Art Show Hallinan Center,  
Cleveland, OH  
1987 \$1000 Painting Award May Show Cleveland Museum of Art (Mark Rosenthal,  
juror for painting and sculpture)

### Collections

Case-Western Reserve University School of Medicine Cleveland, OH  
Cleveland Art Association  
Hallinan Center Cleveland Diocese

(Mr. Utter's works are included in many private collections)

### Publications

- "The Raw and the Cooked: Ohio Juried Exhibitions Come of Age" (cover feature)  
Dialogue 11-12/90  
"Ohio Selections 1990 / Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art" (review)  
Dialogue 11-12/90  
"Slide Rule" (editorial) Dialogue 9-10/90  
"Photography Until Now / The Cleveland Museum of Art" (review) Dialogue 9-10/90  
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"Network News (Cleveland's New Organization for the Visual Arts)" (feature)  
Northern Ohio Live May 90  
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"Idol Thoughts, Altar Egos, Votive Offerings and Ritual Objects (The Sandusky  
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"Anxious and Assured (SPACES)" (review) Dialogue 9-10/89  
"Becoming One With the Past (The Refigured German Image at the Toledo Museum  
of Art)" (review) Dialogue 5-6/89  
"Work From the Tomb: An Installation by Gary Spinosa" (review) Dialogue 3-4/89



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- 1987 Cullinan, Helen, The Plain Dealer "Festive Beat" 12/7/86 p. 6H  
"May Show varied, dynamic" 4/21/87 p. 13A  
"A May Show with oomph" 4/26/87 p. 1I  
"Today" 9/26/87 p.2C
- Hinson, Tom, The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art April 1987 p. 149 and back cover
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- Catalogue, Fifty-first National Midyear Exhibition, Butler Institute of American Art p.29
- Catalogue, Psychotronic and Neopunkedelic Art Exhibition, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania 9/87 p.3, p.19
- 1988 Cullinan, Helen, The Plain Dealer "Works to disturb, challenge" (Review of SPACES exhibit) 2/12  
"Solid professionalism dominates the yearly event" 5/29 p.7H
- Sparks, Amy, Cleveland Edition "We need a May Show that matters" 6/23 p.15  
Northern Ohio Live "An Intensity of Painters" (Review of SPACES exhibit) Jan.
- 1989 Christian, Barbara, Solon Herald Sun "Contemporary show at VAC" 4/6 p.C4
- Cullinan, Helen, The Plain Dealer "Paintings of Poignant Impact" (Review of solo show at William Busta) 6/9  
"Huge art big at May Show" 6/27  
"More than a name change" FRIDAY 12/29 p.12
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- 1990 Chagrin Valley Times "Utter shows at Art Connection" 4/5 p.B7
- Desmett, Don, Dialogue "Art with an edge: the William Busta Gallery" May/June p.21
- Cullinan, Helen, The Plain Dealer "Varied Works Displayed at Newman Art Show" FRIDAY 2/23  
"F.Y.I." (photo) FRIDAY 4/27 p.15  
"The May Show" FRIDAY 5/6 p.17  
"Arts Talk" 9/23 p.2H  
"Today" 9/25 p.5C  
"Seeing every face as a work of art" FRIDAY 9/28 p.3
- The Cleveland Edition "The Week" 9/6 p.22
- Catalogue, The Governor's Residence Art Collection 1990-91 pp.60-61



## Douglas Utter

Lives in Cleveland Heights  
Born in Cleveland, 1950  
Education: Case Western  
Reserve University

I TRY TO DO WORK that seems necessary, work that has a sense of inevitability about it and presents a disturbing reassurance of the reality and gravity of things beyond my perspective.

I think my task is to allude to subjectivity, to my private experience, as forcefully and truthfully as I can, while not evading the problems that beset any attempt to make a place where such intimacies can be inscribed.

To that end my paintings are made with constant reference to flesh. They seek to establish an equivalence of touch, interrupted again and again by the facts of paint and the acts of painting.

I suppose I am trying to describe and assimilate the immaterial shapes of my relations with family and friends, the contours of desire and sorrow and growth.

### "En Famille"

1989

48" x 36"

spray paint, latex on canvas





Douglas Utter  
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November 21, 1990

Dear Tom,

After reflection, it seems to me that the 'over-exposure' of some works in the Cleveland area probably wouldn't be much of a problem for you in my case.

For instance, the paintings "The Drunkenness of Noah", "Flight into Egypt", "X at the End of the World", "The Tormenting of Christ", "Storm on the Sea of Galilee", "The Rape of Proserpine", etc. -- the entire body of work I consider major (excepting works included in the May Show) -- have been seen in the context of one show only in the past three years, either at Joyce's or Bill's. Ruefully, I must tell you that attendance for these shows has been radically small. The most recent exhibit at Bill's drew a crowd of fewer than 600 people (I asked Bill) during its three week run.

I guess I am still surprized and secretly appalled when the work is seen at all; any exposure can feel like over-exposure. But of course there is no audience for any other visual arts institution or gallery in Cleveland that remotely compares with CMA's. It's done with mirrors (if at all).

Enclosed are slides, a resume and statement. If you want anything else from me please let me know. I was glad to see you the other day, but evidently my mind was elsewhere.

Regards,

D-76



MAY 89

# SOUVENIRS

\* \* \* \* \*

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fine art and other essentials

contact William Busta (216) 231-7363  
(216) 321-9165

June 1, 1989

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"Douglas Utter: Paintings" opens Friday,  
June 9 at Souvenirs with a reception for the artist  
from 6 to 9 p.m. The exhibit features, large, inviting  
paintings that offer the viewer intimacy and compassion  
in exchange for attention. The show will continue  
through July 2. Gallery hours are Wednesday through  
Saturday, 11 to 6 (Thursday to 9); and Sunday, 12  
to 5.

The content of these painting embraces individuals,  
couples, and family groupings of parent and child.  
These are not sweet or sentimental, but tough, haunting  
portraits that reach out to reveal. The artist  
draws his imagery from gothic and renaissance religious  
paintings, as well as contemporary newspapers.  
From these diverse sources Utter finds a universal  
and timeless moment that invites identification:  
since the faces of Utter's figures are suggestive  
rather than descriptive, the paintings act as both  
mirror and portrait.



Douglas Utter was born in Cleveland, and spent his childhood and early schooling in that city and in Australia and England. He studied classical literature and languages at Case Western Reserve University. His most recent one-person show was at the Joyce Porcelli Gallery in 1988. Utter won the Painting Award at the 1987 May Show at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Other recent group exhibitions include the May Show in 1986 and 1988; "Young and Restless, Emerging Cleveland Painters" at the Sandusky Cultural Center, 1989; "Arnold, Azzarello, Utter" at Spaces, Cleveland, 1988; "Off the Wall" at Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, 1988; "Psychotronic and Neopunk-edelic Art Exhibition" at Bruce Gallery, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, 1987; and "Third National Artspace Exhibition" in Sacramento, California, 1986. The artist lives in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

- E N D -



As a painter I have little patience with the idea that painting as an art is dead or has somehow been rendered obsolete. For me at least it has yet to outlive its usefulness. But I do believe that there are some real problems facing anyone who attempts effective expression, in paint especially. It is a medium heavy with history, weighed down as much by the revolutions that have tried to set it free, as by tradition and convention. There are many things that need to be balanced and reconciled before the paint is ever applied to a surface, and which also need to find a way to enter into the doing, and in some sense be present in the final work. I think that I am envisioning a general recapitulation of previous expressive imagery and technical innovation, that might be said to make up the 'unconscious' of a strong, evocative work of art. For myself, I feel a need to bring some of these predecessors and influences, which haunt me and which I have loved partially into the light. As I refer to them, or uncover them, they interact with my materials and processes and with my life. However, I do not quite wish to 'quote' from these sources, with all the complex, earnest fears of belatedness and impotence that typically bedevil the post-modern artist, beneath a cloak of ironic fecundity. I believe that expression is possible, that emotional and spiritual authenticity can be achieved and conveyed, despite the fullness of history, and because of it.

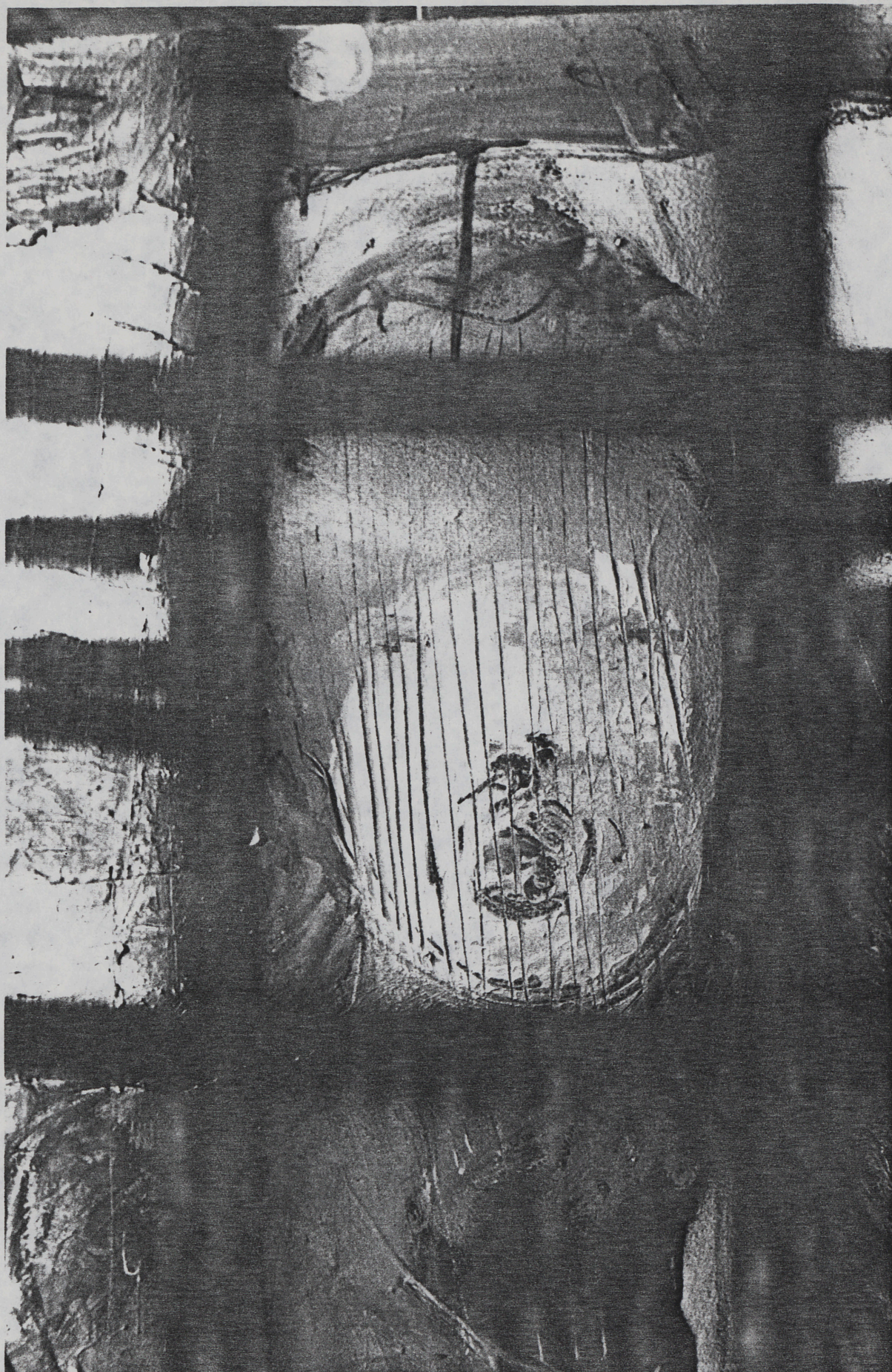
I cannot conceal, here or in my work, that I am often oppressed by an awareness of the seemingly marginal character of the homely and self-indulgent act of painting, in a world where the individual is ever more visibly at the mercy of immense forces, many of them man-made. And yet, leaving changing world-views to one side, I am not sure that things have ever been very different for the individual agent. I take powerlessness to be an inevitable condition in what is after all a fatal world. There is nevertheless, an occasional, but persistent, intuition of freedom, which I try to pursue in my way.

DOUGLAS UTTER











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★ MAY 90

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## RESUME

Douglas Utter, born 1950, is a painter now living in Cleveland, Ohio. Part of his childhood was spent in Australia, and in England, where he began painting. The roots of his imagery are to be found in Cleveland (where he has lived much of his life), but also in the England of his childhood, the museums of Europe, New York City (where he lived during the seventies), and in his present life with his family. His studies at Case-Western Reserve University (interrupted after two years) centered on classical languages, literature, and philosophy, which have also served as a source for such recent works as the "Persephone" cycle. He is deeply interested in art history and current issues in the arts, and is a frequent contributor to such magazines as Dialogue and Northern Ohio Live. In 1987 he received the prestigious \$1000 Painting Award in the Cleveland Museum of Art's annual May Show, and in 1990 was given the First Prize-Purchase Award at the Newman Religious Art Show, at the Hallinan Center in Cleveland. He has been guest lecturer at Cleveland State University, The Sandusky Cultural Center, and various Cleveland galleries. He is married to the sculptor Lori Hyler, and they have two children.

He says of his work: "My painting often deals with spectrums of intimacy and fluctuations of the self, immersed in history."

### Solo Exhibitions

- 1990 The European Art Connection (Chagrin Falls, OH), Heidi Stull, dir. "Recent Paintings" April 13 - May 13.
- 1989 William Busta Gallery (Cleveland, OH), "Paintings" June - July
- 1988 Joyce Porcelli Gallery (Cleveland, OH), "Paintings and Photocopy Derivations" Sept 9 - Oct 9
- 1987 Dobama Theater Gallery (Cleveland, OH), "Works of Douglas Utter" December

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 1990 May Show, Cleveland Museum of Art
- Newman Religious Art Show, Hallinan Center, Cleveland, OH
- 1989 A to Zizi Cleveland Center For Contemporary Art
- May Show, CMA
- Valley Art Association "Contemporary Vignettes" (Chagrin Falls, OH), Christine Morton, dir. April-May
- Sandusky Cultural Center "Young and Restless" Charles T. Mayer, dir. March-April
- William Busta Gallery "Group Show" (Cleveland, OH), Jan
- 1988 Cleveland Center For Contemporary Art "Off The Wall" Oct
- Park Synagogue "Art at Park Festival XII" (Cleveland, OH) Oct 29-Nov 1
- May Show, CMA
- Joyce Porcelli Gallery "Ten By Ten" (Cleveland, OH) Feb
- SPACES "Arnold, Azzarello, Utter (Cleveland, OH) Jan-Feb



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Resume

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Selected Group Exhibitions (cont.)

- 1987 Cleveland Center For Contemporary Art "Off The Wall" Dec  
Edinboro University of PA, Bruce Gallery "Psychotronic and  
Neopunkedelic Art Exhibition"  
Butler Institute of American Art "Fifty-first National  
Midyear Exhibition" (Youngstown, OH)  
May Show, CMA  
1986 Third International Artspace Exhibition (Sacramento, CA)  
Canton Institute of Art "All Ohio Show"  
May Show, CMA

Awards

- 1990 First Prize - Purchase Award Newman Religious Art Show  
Hallinan Center, Cleveland, OH  
1987 \$1000 Painting Award May Show Cleveland Museum of Art  
Mark Rosenthal, juror for painting and sculpture

Collections

Case-Western Reserve University School of Medicine Cleveland  
Hallinan Center Cleveland  
Catharine Redmond New York, NY  
Christopher Pekoc Cleveland  
William Busta Cleveland  
Charles Mayer Sandusky  
Paul Coleman Sandusky  
Amy Sparks Cleveland  
Martha Posner Cleveland  
George and Susan Fitzpatrick Cleveland  
Joyce Porcelli Cleveland  
Timothy Keating and Barbara Perris Tallahassee FL  
Steve Smith Cleveland  
John Stickney Cleveland

(Mr. Utter's works are in numerous other private collections  
in Cleveland, Chicago and New York)



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Resume

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Bibliography

- 1989 Cullinan, Helen, "Paintings of Poignant Impact" The Cleveland Plain Dealer June 9, 1989
- Santer, Rikki, "Douglas Utter: Paintings and Photocopy Derivations" Dialogue March/April 1989
- 1988 Cullinan, Helen, "Works to Disturb, Challenge" The Cleveland Plain Dealer Feb 12, 1988
- Sparks, Amy, "An Intensity of Painters" Northern Ohio Live Jan 1988
- 1987 Psychotronic and Neopunkedelic Art Exhibition Catalogue (Sept 1987) p3, p19  
Fifty-first National Midyear Exhibition, Butler Institute of American Art Catalogue p29
- Hinson, Tom "The 1987 May Show" The Bulletin of The Cleveland Museum of Art p149 and back cover April 1987

Publications

- "Deus Ex Machina (John L. Moore at CCCA)" Dialogue May/June '90
- "The IRWIN Group" (Preview of a show curated by Don Desmett at Cleveland State University Gallery) Northern Ohio Live, April 1990
- "NOVA" (Comments on the New Organization for the Visual Arts) Northern Ohio Live, May 1990
- "Athena Tacha: New Works 1986-9" (A review of the show at CCCA, Sept 1989) Dialogue Nov/Dec 1989
- "Anxious and Assured" (A review of 'Marriage Proposal: the works of Lisa Norton and Paul Pak-Hing Lee' and 'Third World Ties', an installation by Mark McGinnis, at SPACES, March 31-April 21, 1989)
- "Idol Thoughts, Altar Egos, Votive Offerings and Ritual Objects" (A review of works at the Sandusky Cultural Center, Nov 5 Dec 10, 1989) Dialogue March/April 1990
- "Becoming One With the Past" (A review of 'Refigured Painting: The German Image 1960-88' at the Toledo Museum of Art) Dialogue May/June 1989
- "Work From the Tomb: An Installation by Gary Spinosa" (A review of the exhibit at Sheele Galleries, Dec 1988) Dialogue March/April 1989



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### Artist's Statement

I try to do work that seems necessary to me, work that has a sense of inevitability about it and a seriousness which, for once, is not me taking myself seriously. Instead, I think I need to present a (disturbing) reassurance of the reality and gravity of things beyond my perspective. I seek a subjectivity that encompasses and teaches my own. I believe I am waking slowly in my work to my life.

While I am not engaging in commentary when I paint, I have been drawn to sources of figurative imagery which are religious, political and historical. This may be in part because the representation of the personal is scarcely possible (in my own sense of the fitness of things) except when it is also visibly haunted by the bureaucratic, the institutional, and corporate. I think my task is to allude to subjectivity as forcefully and truthfully as I am able, while not evading the problems that beset any attempt to make a place where such intimacies can be inscribed.



## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

MAY 89

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on May Show artists.

FULL NAME: DOUGLAS MAX UTTER

PRESENT POSITION

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 12/8/50 CLEVELAND

CATEGORY/PRIMARY MEDIA:

PAINTING

ART TRAINING (Schools, Scholarships, etc.):

EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN (include location and year):

PLEASE SEE ENCLOSURES

COLLECTIONS THAT NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

AWARDS:

We would appreciate having a statement about your philosophy and work as an artist—either general or something specific about the piece(s) selected for this year's May Show to aid us in the preparation of gallery talks and in the release of publicity materials. For more space, use the back of this sheet.



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# Statement

I try to do work that seems necessary to me, that has a sense of inevitability about it and a seriousness which, for once, is not me taking myself seriously. Instead, I think it needs to be a (disturbing) reassurance of the reality and gravity of things beyond my perspective. I seek a subjectivity that encompasses and teaches my own. I believe I am waking slowly in my work to my life.

While I am not engaging in commentary when I paint, I have been drawn to sources of imagery which are religious, political and historical. This may be in part because the representation of the personal is scarcely possible (in my own sense of the fitness of things) except when it is also visibly haunted by the bureaucratic, institutional and corporate. I think my task is to allude to subjectivity as forcefully and truthfully as I am able, while not evading the problems that beset any attempt to make a place where such intimacies can be inscribed.



The title of the painting 'Clinamen' derives from the critical writings of Harold Bloom. He uses that word to describe the way in which a strong poet will read, or (as he says) misread those poets who have most influenced him, with a resulting release of energies that make his own creative space possible.

The latin poem De Rerum Natura of Lucretius is the word's original context, where it means 'swerve'. It occurs in a description of the action of atomic particles (semina) which, as they fall forever through the universe, must have some slight inclination, so that they bump into each other and thus produce Creation. It also has a psychological implication in the poem. Lucretius writes: 'But that the mind itself does not feel an internal necessity in all its actions and is not as it were overmastered and compelled to bear and put up with this, is caused by a minute swerving of first-beginnings.'

I feel that Bloom's critical approach has been very valuable to me in many ways, and the title is intended as a kind of dedication to him. It also seems appropriate due to the subject matter of the painting, which speaks of birth and of the transformative tensions of parent-child relationships. Lastly, the genesis of the piece involved a series of processes in which I 'misread' or willfully departed from the original states of my own imagery. In 1987 I came up with a fairly straightforward painting based on a photograph of my wife and daughter. Later, I photographed the painting, and then photocopied the photograph, moving it in relation to the machine's scanner and thus stretching out the original image. I painted two works last year based on these photocopies, one of which is 'Clinamen'.

Douglas Utter



DOUGLAS UTTER

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STUDIO: 2570 SUPERIOR 6th FLOOR  
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VITA: CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOLING IN CLEVELAND, AUSTRALIA AND ENGLAND.  
PURSUED STUDIES IN CLASSICAL LITERATURE AND LANGUAGES AT CASE-WESTERN  
RESERVE UNIVERSITY. LIVED AND PAINTED IN N.Y.C. 1976-8. MARRIED, TWO  
CHILDREN.

RECENT EXHIBITIONS:

MAY SHOW, 1986 THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART  
1986 ALL OHIO SHOW THE CANTON ART INSITUTE  
THIRD INTERNATIONAL ARTSPACE EXHIBITION 1986 SACRAMENTO. CA

MAY SHOW, 1987 THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART \$1,000 AWARD FOR PAINTING  
BEST IN SHOW MARK ROSENTHAL, JUROR  
FIFTY-FIRST NATIONAL MIDYEAR EXHIBITION THE BUTLER INSITUTE OF AMERICAN  
ART, YOUNGSTOWN, OH  
AVANTE GALLERY, GROUP SHOW, SEPT. 1987 2094 MURRAY HILL RD. CLEVELAND, OH  
PSYCHOTRONIC AND NEOPUNKEDELIC ART EXHIBITION 1987 BRUCE GALLERY  
EDINBORO UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
WORKS OF DOUGLAS UTTER DOBAMA THEATER GALLERY DECEMBER 1987  
1846 COVENTRY RD. CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OH  
OFF THE WALL DEC. 12 - FEB. 6, 1988 CLEVELAND CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART  
ARNOLD, AZZARELLO, UTTER JAN. 22 - FEB. 19, 1988 SPACES 1216 W. 6th ST.  
CLEVELAND, OH  
TEN BY TEN FEB. - MARCH 1988 JOYCE PORCELLI GALLERY 2021 MURRAY HILL RD.  
CLEVELAND, OH

MAY SHOW, 1988 THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART  
DOUGLAS UTTER PAINTINGS AND PHOTOCOPY DERIVATIONS SEPT. 9 - OCT. 9, 1988  
JOYCE PORCELLI GALLERY 2021 MURRAY HILL RD. CLEVE. OH  
ART AT PARK FESTIVAL XII THE PARK SYNAGOGUE OCT. 29 - NOV. 1, 1988  
CLEVELAND HEIGHTS, OH  
OFF THE WALL OCT.-NOV. 1988 CLEVELAND CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART  
SOUVENIRS GROUP SHOW JAN-FEB 1989 WILLIAM BUSTA, DIR. 2021 MURRAY HILL RD.  
CLEVELAND, OH  
THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS SANDUSKY CULTURAL CENTER MARCH - APRIL 1989  
CHARLES T. MAYER, DIR.  
VALLEY ART ASSOCIATION, GROUP SHOW, APRIL - MAY 1989 CHAGRIN FALLS, OH  
C. MORTON, DIR.  
DOUGLAS UTTER RECENT PAINTINGS SOUVENIRS JUNE-JULY 1989 WILLIAM BUSTA,  
DIR. 2021 MURRAY HILL RD. CLEVELAND, OH



## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on May Show artists.

## FULL NAME:

DOUGLAS MAX UTTER

## PRESENT POSITION

## DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH:

12/8/50

CLEVELAND

## CATEGORY/PRIMARY MEDIA:

PAINTING

## ART TRAINING (Schools, Scholarships, etc.):

SELF-TAUGHT

## EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN (include location and year):

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED RESUME

## COLLECTIONS THAT NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:

## AWARDS:

THE 1987 MAY SHOW, \$1,000.00 PRIZE FOR PAINTING

We would appreciate having a statement about your philosophy and work as an artist—either general or something specific about the piece(s) selected for this year's May Show to aid us in the preparation of gallery talks and in the release of publicity materials. For more space, use the back of this sheet.

I am committed to being unpremeditated in the painting that I do, which has often led me to use materials that are to some extent debased, colors that are stripped and institutional, sources of figurative imagery that are generalized, commercial or propagandistic. These things seem less delusional than some, partly for economic, partly for physical reasons, are easily accessible, and encourage me to draw and inscribe, rather than paint and rhapsodize.

(over)



Lately I have been better able to use certain news photographs as well as other visual commonplaces culled from religious painting, primarily as stylistic elements. This, I think, has pushed the work forcefully toward a subject matter that is both historically evocative and informed with a subjective, autobiographical intensity.

Painting for me is outside of time, a little past and a bit future. When it has been successful, I as spectator am delivered from ( and to ) myself and my sense of otherness, confirmed in an evolving relation to potency and potential realities. A good painting is a ( )-graph of my ghost, and shocks me with these unexpected realities.



RESUME

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BORN: CLEVELAND, OHIO, 12/8/50 CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOLING IN CLEVELAND,  
AUSTRALIA AND ENGLAND. PURSUED STUDIES IN CLASSICAL LITERATURE AND  
LANGUAGES AT CASE-WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY. LIVED AND PAINTED IN NEW  
YORK CITY 1976-8. MARRIED, TWO CHILDREN.

RECENT EXHIBITIONS:

MAY SHOW, 1986 THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART  
1986 ALL OHIO SHOW THE CANTON ART INSTITUTE  
THIRD NATIONAL ARTSPACE EXHIBITION 1986, SACRAMENTO, CA  
MAY SHOW, 1987 THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART \$1,000 AWARD FOR PAINTING  
FIFTY-FIRST NATIONAL MIDYEAR EXHIBITION THE BUTLER INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN  
ART YOUNGSTOWN, OH  
AVANTE GALLERY, SEPTEMBER 1987 2094 MURRAY HILL RD. CLEVELAND, OH  
PSYCHOTRONIC AND NEOPUNKEDELIC ART EXHIBITION 1987 BRUCE GALLERY  
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HILL RD. CLEVELAND, OH  
MAY SHOW, 1988 THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART



THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART  
**ARTIST BIOGRAPHY**

Please complete and return the following questionnaire for our reference file on May Show artists.

**FULL NAME:** DOUGLAS MAX UTTER

**PRESENT POSITION**

**DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH:** December 8, 1950. Cleveland

**CATEGORY/PRIMARY MEDIA:** Painting

**ART TRAINING (Schools, Scholarships, etc.):** Self

**EXHIBITIONS IN WHICH YOUR WORK HAS BEEN SHOWN (include location and year):**

May Show, 1986,7

Artspace Nat'l Exhibition, Sacramento CA 1986

Canton Institute All Ohio 1986

**COLLECTIONS THAT NOW INCLUDE YOUR WORK:**

**AWARDS:**

We would appreciate having a statement about your philosophy and work as an artist—either general or something specific about the piece(s) selected for this year's May Show to aid us in the preparation of gallery talks and in the release of publicity materials. For more space, use the back of this sheet.

I am concerned that my work be honest emotionally, but only in the sense that it deal with actual emotions as directly as possible. I want my work to seduce and beguile me also, I want it to do me as much as I do it; that is why I am an artist: I wish to control my fate and abandon myself to it at the same time. I have painted some things lately that I say explore Art as a metaphor for Consciousness ( just as Consciousness may be taken as itself a metaphor ) and other quasi-semiological concerns. But everything is some sort of sign, especially from a



painterly point of view, and all I want to do through my art is something much more visceral and sensational. I suppose I want to be more alive because of it, and more important in an evangelical sense( almost ); like Oral Roberts, I want to be valid enough in this world to be on the phone to God a good share of the time. I am, too, something of a collector of my own work. I keep a lot of it around and do my new work as close to my old work as I can, even to the point of painting directly on top of old stuff ( 'composting' ). I enlarge portions of recent paintings, or do new versions. I like to keep ~~xx~~ many conversations going on among my works, and between myself and my changing perceptions and judgements of these. I am sometimes too lazy or burned out to paint, but I refuse to be stuck. Subject matter is everywhere; either I deepen and exploit trends inside my work, or I 'borrow' from magazines and newspapers, or sketch from the T.V. Occasionally I do something with <sup>out</sup> any conscious referent, and often these works are best as indicators of new, truer directions for me.

"O "What Shall I Hang on the Chamber Walls" was based on a news photo, and I think is the most successful one of this type that I have done. The original image was of a joyful family reunion. Its classical structure attracted me -- the pyramid is of course a very evocative and versatile form; I thought of Renaissance madonnas, of Guernica, My work tends to be at least melancholy, so the transposition from joy to grief was very easy ( or unavoidable ) for me. Much of my recent painting has to do with my feelings about the death of my father, as seen through the focus of the births of my son and daughter. In this painting I am creating a little 'language' of grief, like the emotional signifiers in Seurat and Birchfield. But the overall intention of the technique is to convey as much strong emotion as possible in a large, simple fashion. I wanted the thing to look as if it had been wept rather than applied. I wanted to have the sensation of wetness from the paint and the color, and a feeling of muscular tension and relaxation from the progression of masses, from the top of the young man's head downward. The title is a line from Whitman's wonderful elegy, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd."



DOUGLAS MAX UTTER

## BRIEF RESUME & BIOGRAPHY

Born Dec. 8, 1950, Cleveland, Ohio. My childhood was spent there and in Australia and England. I studied classical languages and literature at C.W.R.U. in 1974-5, and lived in lower Manhattan from 1976 through 1978. I began painting 'seriously' as a child, and am still 'serious'. I am self-taught. I am married, to another artist, and we have two children.

## STATEMENT

My first concern is that my work be honest emotionally, that it deal as strongly as possible with things that seem bigger than me — I expect my best work to frighten me a little. I want my work also to beguile me and act reflexively as an influence upon me. I am an artist because I wish to control my fate and abandon myself to it at the same time. The 'hands-off' rather illusionistic quality of much of my recent work ( spray-paint is an ethereal medium ) has led me to intellectualize about it in terms of other, semiological sorts of interests and concerns, exploring the possible content of the technical aspects of my work: What is the relationship between a brush stroke and a line of spray-paint? And so on. I can't really get away with any of that, however, because what I really want to do is a thing much more basically sensational and visceral. Among other things, I want to be more alive because of it. I am a collector of my own work, surrounding myself with it and making new things next to, sometimes on top of, old. I enlarge portions of recent paintings, using different materials, or do new versions. I keep many conversations going on among my works, and between myself and my changing perceptions and judgements of these. Subject matter is everywhere; either I deepen and exploit trends inside my work, or I borrow from magazines and newspapers, or sit sketching in front of the T.V.

## RECENT EXHIBITIONS

May Show, Cleveland Museum of Art, 1986, 1987  
All Ohio, Canton Institute, 1986  
ArtSpace National Exhibition, 1986, Sacramento CA